# Creative Misuse

## The Media Archaeology Lab (MAL) Practitioner-In-Residence program is inviting applications for the 2026/2027 cohort!

In *What's the Use?,* the feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed argues that

> "Use can be a way of being in touch with things. We make use of a knife when we need to cut something. Which knife we use might tell us something about the task at hand: a sharper knife might make a thicker piece of cardboard easier to cut. We learn from past experiences about what to use for what; we might know *this* knife is sharper, *this* knife is blunter. Use gives us a sense of things: how they are; what they are like" (21).

**What then, is the use for misuse? In other words, what is the relation between technological misuse, technique and creation?**

The Media Archaeology Lab invites you to submit creative proposals for your interpretation and exploration of this open brief! We welcome proposals for residencies of up to 4 weeks which will be held over the course of the 2026/2027 academic school year (September 2026–March 2027).

Residencies include full 24/7 access to the lab and its collections. As the MAL is a laboratory, we invite applicants to engage with our archives in a hands-on, experimental and independent manner. Technical support will be provided when possible from our network of MAL PAL volunteers.

**In addition to working in the lab, MAL residents are expected to produce some public output in a format of their choosing (e.g. a lecture, demo, video, publication, performance, exhibition etc.) which will demonstrate their residency project and its results. Residents will also provide documentation of the project process for publication on the MAL website as a technical report.** Examples of previous technical reports can be seen here: [mediaarchaeologylab.com/projects](mediaarchaeologylab.com/projects)

Chosen participants will receive a post-facto honorarium of $1000 (pre-tax) to support the production of their work. We are unfortunately not in a position to provide accommodation in Boulder, but we will support you in writing letters of invitation for funding (and/or visa) applications.

The program is open to artists of all genres and disciplines as well as practice-based researchers, tinkerers, retro-tech enthusiasts or other counter-disciplinary practitioners. Applications from established professionals, emerging creators; and students are welcome! Submissions may be made by individuals or collectives (in case of collectives, the stipend will be shared among members). We encourage local, national, and international

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practitioners to apply. If you are excited about the MAL collection and are interested in this hands-on inquiry, we'd love to hear from you!

Apply for the residency here. For any additional questions, please email mediaarchaeology@colorado.edu or oisin.sheerin@colorado.edu

**Deadline for Applications: Jul 22, 2026**

**Responses: Early August**

Founded in 2009, and located within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples in Boulder Colorado, the lab is supported by the College of Media, Communication and Information, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the English Department at the University of Colorado Boulder. The MAL is a space for cross-disciplinary experimental research and creative practice, tinkering, and teaching using functioning historical media. Primarily a site of exploration and play, the MAL invites visitors to actively engage with hundreds of analog and digital devices from all over the world, ranging from the late 19th century right up to the modern day. In this way, the lab tries to foster an imaginative approach to the relationship between past and present to envision alternative possibilities in the future.

The MAL residency program has attracted researchers, artists, musicians, and writers from across the U.S. and from countries around the world such as the UK, Sweden, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland. To get a better sense of what kinds of technologies we have and the projects we have supported, you can browse through the MAL collection at mediaarchaeologylab.com/collection/. Past residencies can be viewed at mediaarchaeologylab.com/projects/, section RESIDENTS.

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